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Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries: implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003

Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.78

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/56/29) in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.78.

2. As indicated in paragraph 1 of the statement, when adopting draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.78, the Second Committee was informed that the programme budget implications for the adoption of the draft resolution were contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/56/645 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1 and Corr.2) and that the provision for the requirements for the implementation of the draft resolution would be decided in accordance with the recommendation of the Fifth Committee.

3. The Advisory Committee notes that, under the terms of operative paragraphs 1, 2 and 9 of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.78, the General Assembly would:

(a) Establish the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, as proposed by the Secretary-General in paragraph 16 of his report;

(b) Request the Secretary-General to take immediate measures to make the Office operational as soon as possible;

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(c) Decide that the provisions of the resolution would be implemented within the approved level of the biennium 2002-2003 budget and request the Secretary-General to seek voluntary contributions for the Office.

4. The Advisory Committee also notes that the activities to be carried out by the Office of the High Representative relate to programme 8, Africa: New Agenda for Development, and programme 9, Trade and development, of the medium-term plan for 2002-2005[1] and to sections 10 and 11A of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (A/56/6 (sects. 10 and 11A), respectively. The key functions of the Office of the High Representative, which reproduce those contained in paragraph 17 of the report of the Secretary-General, are listed in paragraph 5 of his statement.

5. As shown in table 2 and indicated in paragraph 10 of the statement, total requirements would amount to $3,906,400, of which a provision for $3,055,600 would be approved under a new section, 9A, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and another for $850,000 under section 27D, Office of Central Support Services. The proposal would also result in reductions of $709,900 and $1,975,800 under section 10, Africa: New Agenda for Development, and section 11A, Trade and development, respectively, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, as a result of the transfer of activities to the new section 9A. In view of the foregoing, as indicated in paragraph 25 of the statement, the total net additional requirements for the establishment of the Office of the High Representative amount to $1,220,700.

6. The staffing proposed, shown in table 1, includes a total of 13 regular budget posts (9 Professional posts, including 1 Under-Secretary-General, and 4 General Service). This would be achieved by the establishment of one Under-Secretary-General and one D-2 level post and the redeployment of three posts from subprogramme 1 (Mobilization of international support and global coordination) of section 10, Africa: New Agenda for Development (1 P-5, 1 P-4, 1 General Service) and of eight posts from section 11A, Trade and development (1 P-5, 2 P-4, 1 P-3, 1 P-2 and 3 General Service). It is also indicated that it is anticipated that six other posts (1 P-5, 1 P-3, 3 General Service) would be seconded from other organizations or provided through extrabudgetary resources.

7. The amount indicated for non-post resources, out of the total requirements in table 2, amounts to $1,231,400 or to $1,128,400, out of the net total requirements of $1,220,700. This is mostly due to estimated total requirements of $850,800 for rental of premises and alterations ($522,800 and $328,000, respectively) of the space in New York, which would arise under section 27D, Office of Central Support Services, as indicated in paragraphs 22 and 23 of the statement.

8. The Advisory Committee notes that the statement submitted by the Secretary-General only provides the proposed post and non-post changes resulting from the establishment of the Office of the High Representative. It does not provide any indication of the impact of the changes proposed upon the other entities involved or of its related programmatic effects on sections 10 or 11A. In this connection, the statement is also lacking as to how the operational capacity of the organizations and bodies of the system, in particular the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), will be enhanced in their activities aimed at supporting developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, landlocked

developing countries and small island developing States (see operative para. 3 of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.78).

9. **In view of the decision contained in operative paragraph 1 and the request contained in operative paragraph 2 of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.78, the Advisory Committee recommends the establishment of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and of a post at the Under-Secretary-General level to carry out the functions indicated in paragraph 5 of the statement (see also para. 17 of the report of the Secretary-General). The Advisory Committee also recommends that the Fifth Committee take note of the proposal to provide up to 12 other posts for the Office, but that it defer a decision on the permanent establishment of these posts under the new section 9A until submission of a report by the Secretary-General on the programmatic implications and impact on the activities of the affected sections of the programme budget, namely 10 and 11A. The report should also contain a carefully articulated indication of resources required, including total availability of posts, either seconded from other agencies in the system or to be funded from available voluntary contributions.**

10. **In addition, the report should address how the operational capacity of the organizations and bodies of the system, in particular UNCTAD, will be enhanced in their activities aimed at supporting developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, as the Secretary-General is called upon to do in operative paragraph 3 of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.78, and how system-wide coordination is to be achieved. Upon inquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that two posts (one full-time and one part-time) currently deal with this issue within UNCTAD. Information should also be provided at the regional level, taking into account the role of the regional commissions indicated in paragraph 10 of the report of the Secretary-General.**

11. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.78, net additional appropriations up to $1,220,700, as specified in paragraph 27 of the statement submitted by the Secretary-General, would be required at this stage, subject to the procedures for the use and operation of the contingency fund, it being understood that this amount would be adjusted in the light of the report requested above.**

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 6* (A/55/6/Rev.1).